AN: Time for TPYMK and Sarafina to reunite! Is that a good thing or a bad thing? We'll see…

Poison

Shot

Sarafina was left lying there in the dirt by the riverbank, panting as she came down from her high. Sumu always caused the user to become somewhat disorientated after using it. The dizziness that followed confused the lioness as to what was up and what was down.

"Oh, God…"

She placed a paw against her forehead, shivering and shaking. Frequent use of Sumu – and Sarafina certainly *did* use it frequently – would cause tremors in the body. It made the user unstable. Both mentally and physically.

Damn headaches, Sarafina thought, feeling a throbbing pain in her skull while she trembled. She felt awful. Sick to the core. *This sucks…*

Sarafina slowly rose into a sitting position, taking a good luck at her forepaws. Her claws were decaying, since she'd been chewing them in an attempt to try and take her mind off the cravings. She was now only a mere shell of the beautiful lioness that she once was. Sometimes she thought that nothing remained of her old personality at all…

"It was worth it," she told herself, trying to sound convinced that she had done the right thing. "It was worth it…"

Inevitably, she failed at this.

Within seconds, the lioness had been reduced to tears. Sobbing into her paws, she struggled to cope with the shame of her actions. For the first time – ever since she took that hit of marijuana all those months ago – she felt totally disgusted with herself.

"You stupid…" Sarafina was tempted to swear and curse at herself, but she resisted the urge. She slapped a paw repeatedly against her forehead. "Stupid, stupid, stupid!"

The words of TPYMK – that stupid detective who kept ruining her life in every way imaginable – echoed in her mind.

"*And* don't *get high. I'll know if you do. I can smell it.*"

Oh, he's gonna kill me, Sarafina thought, tears still trickling down her cheeks. *I should have listened… Why didn't I listen to that idiot?*

Her stomach suddenly lurched, and Sarafina found herself puking bloody vomit up into the river once more.

This was how she had first met the mysterious detective. He was the only person she'd ever known to actually show… concern for her. That was something that she never expected. Who would *ever* show compassion towards a Sumu user?

It was a rare moment for Sarafina. She never truly realised up until now just how much TPYMK actually did care for her – even if he didn't show it most of the time. All the effort he went to remind her not to get high… It was for her own good. To protect her. He obviously wanted to her to live. Get off the drugs completely, even. She'd never come across such kindness in her life… It both amazed and saddened her to think of how stupid she'd been.

Sarafina finished throwing up in the river. She walked over to a much cleaner part of the waters in order to wash away the remnants of vomit that remained on her muzzle.

It was a shot. A sharp shot of pain to remind Sarafina that the Sumu had her in its grasp.

She stared at her reflection in the water. Studied her weary eyes and untidy face.

You're a waste, she told herself. There was an aching pain in her heart that she could only describe as worthlessness. *Why do you keep doing this to yourself?*

Ever since she'd started on the Sumu drug, she thought that it was the only thing that gave her a purpose in life. The only thing that really mattered. The pain, the health problems, and the cravings didn't matter. All she cared about was getting her next fix. The high… It was unlike anything she'd ever felt before.

And it was killing her.

Sarafina had to admit that now. These days, she threw up like this – in copious amounts – every time she took Sumu. She felt weaker with each passing day. Her strength was dwindling. Every time she woke up, her bones were aching. Her claws failed to grow properly. Her eyesight often became blurry at times.

In short: Sarafina would be dead within a month if she kept on using the drug.

"You have to stop now," Sarafina said, still crying softly. "You have to stop."

But it was so hard. Even now, she found herself glancing at the coconut halve where the liquid Sumu still remained. Maybe there were a few little drops she could inject for five more minutes of heaven…

Shut up, Sarafina snapped at herself. *You worthless piece of filth.*

Yeah. It felt good to insult herself. Anything to keep her mind away from the sickening vileness of Sumu.

Sarafina slowly walked along the riverside. She spotted a comfy spot next to a bush where she could rest in peace for a while. She felt like a nap. That should clear her head. An hour or so to straighten things out…

I won't do it ever again, Sarafina promised, resting her head on her forepaws. *Or I'll slit my own throat.*

Sarafina's eyes gently flickered shut. The Sumu actually assisted in making the user rather drowsy after experiencing a high. It wasn't long before she drifted off into a deep sleep.

And, just for a moment, she wished that she would never wake up.

"Hey… Hey!"

Sarafina jolted awake, eyes darting left and right in fear. The Sumu often made her paranoid that someone might be out to attack her. She soon calmed down when she saw that TPYMK was prodding her awake, though.

"Oh… it's just you," Sarafina sighed, relieved. For a second, she feared that Timon may have come back to finish her off… He struck her as the type of animal to take revenge. Luckily, that wasn't the case. This time, anyway…

"Yeah. Terrible, isn't it?" TPYMK quipped.

Sarafina noticed that his trenchcoat was stained with some sort of yellowy substance. *Just what has he been up to?*

The lioness groaned, rubbing some sleep from her eyes with a paw.

"How did you even find me here?"

"Well, it's not too hard to detect the smell of stale sweat and dirty paws," TPYMK replied. "Don't you ever take a bath? I wouldn't be surprised if you had fleas."

"I do *not* have fleas!" Sarafina protested, taking a moment to scratch underneath her chin with a hind leg. "Well, not many…"

TPYMK frowned at her, before glancing at the river. "Anyway, I checked out that lab."

"I can see that," Sarafina said, raising her eyebrows at the dusty marks which littered the detective's trenchcoat. "You look almost as much of a mess as me."

"I don't think so," TPYMK said, shaking his head.

"Whatever," Sarafina said. "So what happened—"

"You got high again, didn't you?" TPYMK interrupted, staring once more at the lioness.

Sarafina stared back at him in silence. For those brief few moments, she was very tempted to lie and say that she hadn't gotten high. After all, she'd done it before. It wouldn't be too hard to tell one more little lie…

But she didn't.

"Yeah," she admitted, looking dejected with herself. "Yeah, I did."

TPYMK rolled his eyes. "Jesus Christ, Sarafina! Can you listen to a simple instruction just *once*? Why do you always have to—"

The detective stopped speaking when he noticed that Sarafina was crying. He narrowed his eyes at her. "What's wrong?"

"I'm sorry," she said, tears streaming from her eyes. It was a show of emotion that he'd never expected to see from her before. "I didn't mean to. But the urge was just too strong… I couldn't stop it."

TPYMK stared into her eyes. It was clear that, for once, Sarafina showed clear remorse for her actions. This wasn't what she wanted – and that was surprising to the detective. He was under the impression that she would never show sorrow for taking drugs.

TPYMK waved a hand in the air. "Look – just forget it. It doesn't matter

right now."

Sarafina wiped her tears away, staring down at the ground. "Yeah, it does," she insisted. "I'm done using it, anyway. I've made my mind up."

TPYMK's eyes widened in shock. Sarafina – Sumu User of the Year – was actually *giving up* drugs? It was unthinkable! "Seriously?"

Sarafina nodded. "Yeah… I mean it. It's killing me. I feel so… so *wrong*. I feel terrible. I can barely find the strength to raise my voice. My skin doesn't even feel like it's mine anymore."

"Well… that's great," TPYMK said, prompting Sarafina to look angrily at him. "No, not that – I mean you giving up the drugs. It's wonderful, in fact."

"Whatever," Sarafina snapped. "I don't need your pity."

"I don't pity you," TPYMK said. "Sarafina, I said I would help you get off the drugs. That's a promise. Looks like you're not doing so bad right now."

"We'll see," Sarafina mumbled. "Now, what did you find out at this lab place? Find any cooks?"

"Yeah," TPYMK said. "Two of them. I've met them before, actually. Back when I first heard of the Sumu drug. I got into a bar fight with them."

"*You* in a bar fight?" Sarafina laughed. "What were you drinking? Chocolate milk?"

"Yes," TPYMK answered.

Sarafina's face fell. "That was supposed to be a joke, you know."

"They're creating a new strain of Sumu," TPYMK revealed, ignoring what Sarafina had said. "One that's even worse."

Sarafina stared in shock. "A new kind of S? You've gotta be kidding me. What… what does it do?" She couldn't deny that she was curious as to what the effects could be.

"It increases the life span of a user," TPYMK explained, "but it makes them even more addicted. You could last – I think – seven months before dying. Currently, you only last about four months while using it."

Sarafina frowned, knowing that she had been on the drug for almost

four months now. She pushed the thought to the back of her mind, though. "Really?" she said. "Well, that's interesting, I guess."

"And what about you?" TPYMK asked. "What's the reaction to Pumbaa's death?"

"Nothing," Sarafina said. "They just keep on partying. Only no one's selling. I didn't see Timon there, though."

"Why not?" TPYMK questioned.

The lioness shrugged. "I don't know," she said honestly. "He could be anywhere."

"We're gonna have to find that little creep," TPYMK said. "I want to know just who's running this operation. He certainly likes to keep himself hidden."

"Well, that's the way to do it," Sarafina said. "If I was slinging Sumu, I'd have, like, a hundred other guys to do everything for me. While I take all the credit."

"It looks like that's happening right now," TPYMK told her. "We're gonna have to question someone who works for him if we want some answers. Otherwise this operation is just going to keep getting more elaborate – and more people will die as a result."

"So what do we do?" Sarafina wondered.

"Tomorrow night, I'm gonna go to that party, pin him to a tree and stick a gun to his head," TPYMK said. "He'll have no choice but to answer my questions. I seriously doubt that a pathetic little worm like him is gonna die for his boss."

"You probably have a point," Sarafina said, once again thinking of the traumatic rape. "He was such a sleaze… What do you want me to do, anyway?"

"Nothing," TPYMK said simply. "You need a rest. You've been through quite a lot. And I don't want you near any of those parties again. They're far too dangerous. I don't want you getting addicted ever again, either… One joint is all it'll take to get you back on that stuff."

"Don't worry," Sarafina assured him. "I told you already: I mean it this time."

The detective saw honesty in her eyes. "Good." TPYMK looked

around. "Well, come on, then. Let's go home. It's getting late."

"Yeah," Sarafina agreed, climbing to her feet. "I think I could—"

"Oh, my God."

Sarafina stopped when she saw the look of horror on TPYMK's face. He was staring right at her.

"What?" Sarafina asked. She didn't understand. "What is it?"

TPYMK pointed at Sarafina's midsection. "Look."

Sarafina looked down—

—and saw that her stomach had grown into a huge bump.

To Be Continued…

AN: I think you know what's happened to Sarafina. See you next time!

NEXT TIME: Sarafina has to make a tough decision…